

Understanding the Net Zero Challenge for SMEs in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

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Headline Facts

131 respondents;
68 (52%) from South Oxfordshire,
54 (41%) from Vale of White Horse,
5 (4%) OCC and 4 (3%) Cherwell.

Wide range of sectors:
Community or Charity,
Café, Retail, Arts & Recreation,
Professional and Scientific
Construction, Tourism & Travel,
Mostly firms established for
10+ years (66%), but with
<10 staff (73%)

Main challenges
Access to funding (46%)
Growing business (37%)
Responding to environmental
challenges (28%)
Making a profit (27%)

64% are aware & understand UK
Govt's intentions for Net Zero,
32% aware but don't understand
4% unaware

19% are fully active in lowering
emissions
51% are engaged but could do more,
24% not doing anything but would like
to start
5% not engaged and do not intend to

Barriers to action:
Access to finance (66%)
Lack of resource internally (34%)
Lack of time (28%)
The return on investment is not
sufficient (23%)

Likelihood to do more to reduce
carbon emissions
likely/very likely (70%),
unlikely/very unlikely (9%)
On the fence (21%)

Support
Ear-marked small grant (89%)
Access to sustainability platform (53%)
Mentoring from a sustainability expert
(51%)

Recommendations

Recommend a blended approach to the support provided, particularly while the efficacy of each approach is evaluated

Opportunity to experiment with the way grants are allocated/combined with other support

Important to evaluate which support-mix is most effective in achieving maximal reduction in carbon emissions

E29: Supporting decarbonisation – what comes next?

Programme support and guides



Supported decarbonisation plans or energy audits



Grant funding

